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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

State Department review completed

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15 May 1967

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Approved For Release 2005/08/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A002000010005-8

Approved For Release 2005/08/17 : CIA-RDP79T00826A002000010005-8

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Information as of 1600  
15 May 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Communist military campaign plans in the central highlands of South Vietnam during the upcoming rainy season in that area have been captured by US forces.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

US forces have terminated Operation JUNCTION CITY after four months in the War Zone "C" area of northern Tay Ninh Province and in adjacent areas of Binh Duong Province; however, Communist main force units, spearheaded by the 9th Viet Cong Division, are still considered to pose a seven-regiment threat to allied positions in northwestern III Corps (Paras. 1-4). A notebook captured near Plei Me in the central highlands provides information on the rainy season campaign plan of the B-3 Front and suggests that large-scale infiltration is taking place into this area (Paras. 5-9).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Constituent Assembly defeated a proposal to delete the provision requiring a presidential candidate to be "introduced" by 30 elected representatives (Paras. 1-2). A potentially strong slate of candidates for the upper house of the future legislature is being planned (Para. 3).

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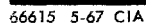
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Operation JUNCTION CITY, the largest and one of the most successful allied search-and-destroy campaigns of the Vietnam war, ended on 14 May. The four-month campaign, which was targeted primarily against Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) base installations and command-control facilities in the War Zone "C" area of northern Tay Ninh Province and adjacent areas of Binh Duong Province, inflicted casualties of more than 2,700 killed on major elements of the 9th Viet Cong Division and 273rd Viet Cong Regiment.

2. The operation also resulted in at least the temporary denial of War Zone "C" to an estimated 7,100 enemy personnel in the area, and in the capture and/or destruction of large numbers of bunkers, equipment, and supplies, including nearly 600 weapons. In addition, US forces seized a considerable quantity of enemy documents which, among other things, shed important new light on Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory and on the organization and staffing of COSVN. US losses in the operation totaled 282 killed and 1,576 wounded.

3. Despite the impressive successes of JUNCTION CITY, there are continuing indications that the 9th Viet Cong Division, supported by the 273rd Regiment and the 7th NVA Division, is again preparing for offensive action in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Phuoc Long provinces.

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4. Communist main force units in northwestern III Corps are presently considered capable of conducting coordinated attacks employing as many as seven regiments. Allied troops and installations extending from Prek Klok Special Forces Camp in the west to Dong Xoai Special Forces Camp in the east and along Highway 13 in Binh Duong and Binh Long provinces are the most likely objectives for enemy action.

Communist Plans in the Central Highlands

5. A notebook captured northwest of the Plei Me Special Forces Camp on 3 May provides an outline of the rainy season campaign plan of the B-3 Front, the major VC/NVA headquarters in the central highlands. The notebook may have belonged to a battalion-level cadre member of the 95 "B" NVA Regiment, last located in the vicinity of the Duc Co Special Forces Camp.

6. The notebook disclosed that the mission of the B-3 Front is to make a maximum effort to tie down, disperse and destroy American troops in the highlands. This mission was apparently based on the Communist assessment that some US forces would be withdrawn from the highlands to reinforce other units in the coastal areas of II Corps.

7. Other entries in the notebook outlined general plans for this year's six-month rainy season in the central highlands. These included harassing activities to be directed against Duc Co, several district headquarters and highways 14, 15 and 21. The notebook also contained an undated draft plan for a battalion-size ambush of a mechanized convoy on Highway 19. Apparently, this was to be "the opening attack of the rainy season campaign which was dictated by a resolution of B-3 and the 95 'B' Regiment Party Committee."

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8. Other entries in the notebook suggest that large-scale infiltration of North Vietnamese personnel is taking place into the central highlands. One entry indicated that the B-3 Front continued to receive replacements from North Vietnam. Another item, a directive from the B-3 Front, instructed its recipient to make preparations to receive additional troops and to improve administration "because the number of troops arriving from North Vietnam is increasing every day."

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The importance of the central highlands to the Viet Cong was underscored by recent statements of a North Vietnamese defector

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This officer stated that the Communists consider the central highlands the "principal strategic" battleground in South Vietnam and, as such, the number one theater of operations. He also predicted that major Communist attacks would take place there in June 1967.

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Constituent Assembly review of the presidential electoral regulations during sessions on 12 and 13 May turned out to be other than a pro forma ratification of already approved provisions. The deputies, instead, reopened debate on the provision that a candidate must be "introduced" by 30 elected representatives, but a proposal to delete it, which would have been in the interests of Premier Ky, was defeated. The meeting on 12 May, was interrupted by about 100 demonstrators purporting to be members of the Catholic Citizens Bloc, who protested the same provision, possibly at the behest of the government, according to the US Embassy. Several other less controversial alterations in the law were approved, however.

2. The assembly was scheduled on 15 May to reopen the issue of a single balloting versus a run-off election for the presidency if no candidate wins a minimum plurality of the total vote. Several sources have told US Embassy officers that, in contrast to the previously approved single election concept, the deputies may approve another version requiring a winning candidate to have a 30 or 35 percent minimum of the vote.

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### Candidates for National Legislature

3. A potentially strong slate of candidates for the upper house of the national assembly consisting of retired General Tran Van Don, former deputy premier Tran Van Tuyen, and prominent Constituent Assembly deputy Dang Van Sung, is reportedly in the planning stages. All three men have indicated that they would probably support Ky's presidential candidacy. Upper house tickets will probably consist of between six and ten candidates, depending on the forthcoming legislative electoral regulations, and all the members of the winning slates will become senators. Other slates for the upper house should start to emerge as the Constituent Assembly finishes the presidential regulations and

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moves on to the legislative electoral law. Both the assembly and the Peoples-Army Council will probably organize ticket combinations from their existing organizations.

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